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U. S. Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Thursday, July 23, 1931

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Trade Secrets". Information approved by the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletin available: "Stain Removal".

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Today I'm going to tell you about my hobby. Collecting stamps? No. Collecting coins? No. Nor ferns, fossils, shells, mosses nor any of the other things most people collect. My hobby is collecting housekeeping ideas - easy ways other women have discovered to do this and that little household job. Tricks of the trade, you know, or as business men would call them, trade secrets.

In my desk I keep a folder for my collection. Whenever I hear of a new wrinkle, I jot it down on a card and slip it into the folder.

Yesterday, when I was rummaging in my desk, I said to myself, "Why not have a housekeeper's exchange? Why not tell your radio friends about some of these good ideas you have collected from here, there and everywhere? Maybe they'll write you some of their discoveries in return."

No sooner said than done, as the story books say. So here I am today laden with my idea collection and all ready to pass on to you some of the useful ideas my friends have given me.

Did you ever think of blotting paper as a household aid? A relative of mine, who has a large family, says that the supply of white blotting paper she keeps on hand has saved the day in her home many and many a time. Accidents, you know, will happen, whether families are large or small. So she keeps a pack of new, white good sized blotters in her desk and in the sideboard. The bowl of flowers may be tipped over on the polished mahogany table. Ink now and then takes a tumble on the desk. And milk or fruit juice or something else is sure to be spilled on the white tablecloth. Very little damage is done if the material spilled can be taken up quickly and rapidly before it has time to spread or soak in. A large plain white blotter will absorb liquid quickly - whether it is ink or lemonade and whether it is on the polished victrola or the best linen tablecloth. This often saves laundering, since the spot on the tablecloth is taken up so quickly and thoroughly that it never shows at all.

And when candle wax drips on the centerpiece, blotters will come in handy again. Scrape off the hardened wax on the surface with a dull knife. Then lay the cloth between clean white blotters and press with a hot iron.

The blotters will absorb the melted grease.

Did you ever think of using nut meats for remedying small scratches on furniture? Cousin Susan told me about that bright idea. When an unsightly surface scratch occurs on her polished table or chairs, she rubs chopped walnuts or Brazil nuts on it and, sure enough, the scratch disappears. Of course, this wouldn't do for deep scars, which require refinishing, but it is helpful for any little ones.

Here's a hint from an economical housewife, who makes her own soap jelly and chips for laundering and dish washing. She saves all the small left-over soap pieces around the house. Some of them she runs through her meat grinder and keeps the flakes thus made in a can until laundry day. From other pieces she makes soap jelly by dropping them in a glass jar, filling the jar with hot water and letting them stand until they are dissolved. Mild soap jelly is fine for shampoos, too, she says.

While we're on the subject of laundering, here's an idea from a woman who has to use a folding ironing board instead of a wall board. (I am always sorry for anyone who can't have the convience of a board that lets down from the wall.) For a long time this housekeeper was much troubled because the end of the board that stood on the floor became soiled so quickly. Finally she hit on the idea of making an oilcloth bag to slip over this end and protect it. Her ironing board cover now stays clean and ready for use.

Do you ever do any tinting or dyeing at home? Do you ever have the sad experience of dyeing your hands as well as the garment? I confess that I spent hours once trying to remove a bright green stain from my fingers before going out to a bridge party. I used lemon, hot water, even scouring soap, all to no avail. That color had to wear off and it was many days before the green hue deserted my nails. Now I use rubber gloves or a soap shaker. The soap shaker idea came from a friend. She puts her soap dye or her bag of powdered tint in her soap shaker. Then she shakes it back and forth in the water until it has dissolved. This saves putting hands in the liquid and makes the color distribute evenly into the water.

A young business woman I know whose work requires months of travel has learned a thing or two about over-night laundering in hotel rooms. She solves the problem of where to hang her laundry - whether it is underwear or handkerchiefs or stockings - by using wooden clothes hangers. Those with a straight bar for shirts and trousers hold stocking and handkerchiefs. Clothes hangers are always available even where clothes lines or racks are lacking. And the plain wooden ones will not cause rust or paint marks. If an electric fan is available, turn the breeze on the wet clothes and they will dry twice as quickly.

Another suggestion in my collection came from an electrician. He believes that women should be warned about dangers in using household electrical devices. Simple precautions will prevent accidents. His advice was: "Never turn electricity on or off when you are standing on a wet or even a damp floor. If you do so the current is apt to pass through your body". This applies especially to the kitchen, the bathroom and the laundry, where water is

most likely to be spilled. Also avoid turning light switches on or off when standing in a wet place, like a freshly mopped floor. And never use a wet cloth or wet hands around an electrical device, like a stove, when the current is connected.

This season is likely to be mildew time. Damp, warm weather, you know, is just what this or any mold likes. So keep an eye out for the clothes you sprinkle and roll up, or for any garments you have put away in a place that might become damp. Dish cloths and dish mops also need attention. Dish mops need sunning and thorough drying to keep sweet. One ingenious woman uses a milk bottle for drying her dish mop. She stands the handle of it up in the empty bottle with the dishevaled top-knot exposed to the sun and air in an open kitchen window.

Before we say good-bye for today there's just about time for two more ideas -- two good ways to save left-over food. Canned pimientos, since they are usually used in small quantities at a time, are very likely to stand exposed and mold, while they wait to be used. But they will keep indefinitely in the refrigerator, if, when you remove them from the sealed tin, you drain them, put them in a glass tumbler, and cover them with salad oil.

Left-over pieces of bread, if left in the bread box may also mold and go to waste. If they are dried out in the oven, however, and rolled or ground up in a meat grinder, the crumbs can be stored away in a jar or can and will then be all ready for use in scallops, croquettes or so on when you want them. In a tightly closed jar or can, however, they may become damp and mold. Better cover the open top on the container with a piece of clean cheesecloth fastened on with a rubber band. The warm air in the kitchen will keep them fresh and dry.

Tomorrow: "A Summer Luncheon."